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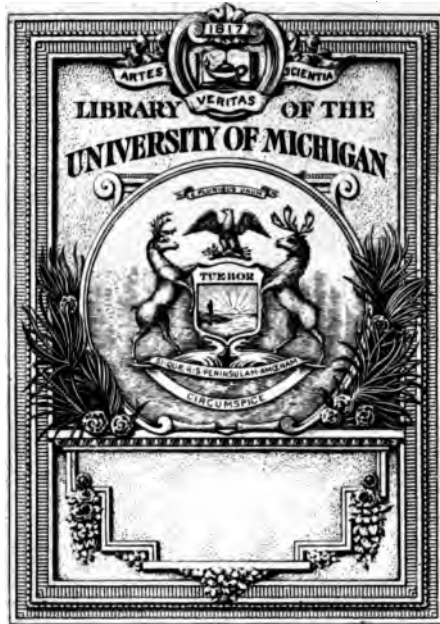
EXTRACTS FROM THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE SOCIETY RELATING
TO THE SAME

AND

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE

OF

AARON DAVIS WELD FRENCH



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A SKETCH OF THE LIFE

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AARON DAVIS WELD FRENCH



BOSTON
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY
1897



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*[Extract from the Report of the Committee on Heraldry,
Henry Ernest Woods, Chairman.]*

It is the committee's sad duty to chronicle the death, during the past autumn, of one of its oldest members, Mr. Aaron Davis Weld French, whose ardent and enthusiastic interest in heraldic matters and in the committee's work is well known, and who will be a great loss to his associates and to the Society. His memory will be fittingly preserved in the very valuable collection of heraldic works which his executors have so generously given, in his name, to the Society's Library.

*[Extract from the Report of the Committee on the Library,
Henry Winchester Cunningham, Chairman.]*

* * * In this list is included a very valuable donation from the estate of the late Aaron Davis Weld French, consisting of about 250 volumes and valued at nearly \$1,000, a detailed list of which is submitted with this report.

As will be seen, these books are mostly on heraldry and the genealogy of our English forefathers, and are of the greatest value to our Library because most of the books cannot be found elsewhere in the city of Boston. This committee wishes to place upon record a grateful tribute to the memory of Mr. French, who took so much interest in the welfare of this Society, and whose memory will be perpetuated by this gift. A special book-plate will be placed in each of these books.




MEMOIR
OF
AARON DAVIS WELD FRENCH.

AARON DAVIS WELD FRENCH, son of Jonathan and Hannah Weld (Williams) French, was born in Boston, December 15, 1835, in the house of his grandfather, John Davis Williams, which stood on the site of the present Catholic cathedral at the corner of Washington and Malden streets. He inherited the broad, liberal business views of his grandfather, while his education at Newport, R.I., by the Rev. John Overton Choules, the author of several scholarly works, early sowed the seeds for historic research. In 1851 he visited Europe in the company of Mr. Choules, the trip being chronicled in the "Young Americans Abroad." In 1854 he entered the counting-house of Phineas Sprague & Co., in Boston, where he had his first experience in the China business.

He joined the independent company of Cadets on the 13th of November, 1856, and in 1859 made his first voyage to China, while in 1860 he represented the business firm of Wetmore, Williams & Co. at Yokohama, Japan. In 1862 he established the second Boston commission house at Nagasaki, Japan, and was for a time the representative member of the United States in the Foreign Council Municipal of that place.

In 1867 he returned to Boston, bringing with him the first Japanese officers who completed their education among us, and for a time he made Boston one of the centres for the education of the Japanese. In 1869 he, with two other travellers, was the first to announce in Japan the completion of the Union Pacific Railroad, they having made the trip from New York to Yokohama in thirty travelling days. Before returning home in August of that year the Foreign Office of Japan appointed him the financial agent of the Japanese government at Boston, as well as official bearer of despatches to the United States. In 1871



he engaged in business in New York city, but three years later returned to Boston. His historic literary researches are shown by his works on "The Surname and Coat of Arms of the Williamses;" "Index Armorial," published in 1892; "Frenches of Scotland," published in 1893; "County Records of the Surnames of Francus, Franceis, French in England," published in 1896. He was Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, member of the Scottish History Society, of the New-England Historic Genealogical Society (elected May 2, 1883), Sons of the Revolution, Veteran Corps of Cadets, and of the Union, Exchange, and Country Clubs. He married, February 8, 1877, Elizabeth French Davis, daughter of George H. Davis. She was born in Boston, November 18, 1848, and died there, September 21, 1891.

He died in Boston on the 5th of October, 1896.

Personally and socially Mr. French was one of the most agreeable of men. His tastes were scholarly. Quiet and unobtrusive in his manners, he yet was possessed of a large fund of information upon special subjects, which he was always glad to share with other workers in the same direction. During his later years he took a strong interest in genealogical work. Besides the three volumes published, he had another in preparation at the time of his death.

By CHARLES E. HURD.

A. D. WELD FRENCH HERALDIC COLLECTION.

PREPARED BY FREDERIC WILLARD PARKE.

RECEIVED NOVEMBER 27, 1896.

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- ANSTIS, JOHN.
Observations introd. to an historical essay on the Knighthood of the Bath.
Lond., 1725. sq. O, pp. 112. 74 plates.
- APPLETON, W. S.
Positive pedigrees and authorized arms of New Eng. Bost., 1891. O, pp.
10.
- APPLETON, WM. S., *ed.*
Report of record commissioners; Boston births, baptisms, marriages and
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- BARA, HIEROSME DE.
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- DELISLE, M. L.**
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- EDMUNDS, FLAVELL.**
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- MERLET, M. L.**
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- NICOLAS, NICHOLAS HARRIS, ed.**
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History and antiquities of Cleveland. Lond., 1846. F, pp. viii, 623. Por. Illus.
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